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Denver FBI Seizes 2 in Panther Killing

DENVER, June 5 (UPI)—FBI agents and police lobbed tear gas into the basement of a Black Panther headquarters early today to flush out two men suspected of the torture-murder of a Negro militant in Connecticut last month.

Berry Hithe, 35, and Landon Robert Williams, 25, were unarmed and offered no resistance when arrested at the An Naturel Club, the headquarters for the Black Panthers in Denver.

Authorities lobbed tear gas

grenades into the basement of the building when the group inside defied orders to come out. Besides Hithe and Williams, eight other Panther members were routed by the tear gas but were not arrested.

Scott Werner, agent in charge of the FBI in Denver, said Hithe and Williams faced charges in the slaying of Al Rackley, 24, a fellow Panther who apparently was tortured and shot after standing trial before a "kangaroo court" for alleged wrongdoings in the Panther organization.

A Federal indictment was issued against the two in New Haven, Conn., May 27, charging them with murder, kidnaping, conspiracy to commit murder, conspiracy to commit kidnaping and binding.

(On Wednesday, FBI agents raided the Chicago Black

Panther headquarters in an unsuccessful attempt to capture George Sams Jr., 23, who is charged with murder in the Connecticut slaying. Six men and two women were seized in the Chicago raid and charged with harboring a fugitive.)

Authorities said Rackley may have been killed because fellow Panthers suspected he had tipped off police in the arrest of 21 militants for allegedly planning to bomb department stores and police stations in New York City.

His body was found in a swamp near New Haven, a few days after he was kidnaped from New York City. On the body was a note warning Panther co-founder Bobby Seale not to deliver a speech at the University of Oregon in Eugene. The city was hit by numerous firebombings the night of the talk.